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### Peru's "Shameful Secret": The Consequences of the Squatter Settlements of Lima

Christian Silva

*University of New Hampshire, Durham*

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#### Recommended Citation

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# Peru's "Shameful Secret": The Consequences of the Squatter Settlements of Lima



Peru's Wall of Shame (Muro de la Vergüenza)

Source: Daily Mail

Christian Silva  
Senior Honors Thesis in History  
Thesis Advisor: Julia Rodriguez  
Spring Semester 2020

## **Introduction:**

In 1985, construction of what would soon be described as the “Wall of Shame” began in the city of Lima. The wall is a barrier, about ten feet high that runs through four municipalities. The wall is six miles long, made of concrete with barbed wire on the top, and divides the wealthy and the poor residents of the city. More specifically, it segregates the established elite of Lima from the residents that have migrated from rural areas of Peru. In the 1980’s, a large number of migrants from rural Peru came to Lima seeking refuge from the violence between the Maoist guerilla group the Shining Path and the Peruvian government. The migrants would settle on the outskirts of the city, on abandoned hillsides constructing mass informal settlements. A large majority of these migrant refugees would travel to wealthy areas of Lima, such as Casuarinas, to find employment, and ultimately new homes.

The response from the inhabitants of these wealthy communities was not one of warm welcome, but rather rejection of the migrants. In fact, the construction of the wall was instigated by a private academy in the Surco district as they began to surround their property with tall fences. The school stated that they were taking precautionary security measures in order to protect themselves from the migrant settlements. This began a trend where several residents in Casuarinas began building their own wall, and little by little, the wall began to grow in size and length. Many residents expanded the wall with permission and help from local governments, but financed the construction themselves. Some Casuarinas residents have justified the construction of the wall, as they claim that it had lowered the crime rate in the neighborhood. Nonetheless, the wall has drawn

comparisons with other barriers built to separate two social or ethnic groups such as the Berlin Wall and the Northern Ireland “peace walls.”<sup>1</sup>

Lima’s Wall of Shame is not just a physical barrier enforcing class and race segregation, but also a symbol of the social, political, and economic outcomes generated by the growth of shantytowns on the outskirts of the city. Beginning in the 1950’s many Latin American cities saw an increase in land invasions on the periphery of the city in order to establish squatter settlements.<sup>2</sup> In 1952, 14% of the Mexico City population lived in these self-help settlements, which rose to 46% by 1966.<sup>3</sup> The trend also applies to the city of Lima. Historically, the shantytowns surrounding Lima existed prior to the large wave of internal migration that occurred during the violence between the Shining Path and the Peruvian government. History shows that a large amount of these shantytowns began in the 1950’s, but later were integrated into the larger city of Lima as established districts.<sup>4</sup>

While it does seem that Lima’s shantytowns did expand greatly in the 1950’s, there are records showing that the construction of the shantytowns existed a few decades prior. Anthropologist Jose Matos Mar published a 1955 study called, *Estudio de Las Barriadas de Lima*, in which he compiled information about the shantytowns, which he referred to as “barriadas.” He reports the first known formation of the barriadas in 1924, with an exponential growth of barriadas beginning in the early 1950’s.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Megan Janetsky, “Lima’s ‘Wall of Shame’ and the Art of Building Barrier,” *The Atlantic Magazine*, September 7, 2019, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2019/09/peru-lima-wall/597085/>.

<sup>2</sup> Alan Gilbert, *The Latin American City* (Nottingham: Russell Press, 1998), 83.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 82.

<sup>4</sup> Bill Chambers, “The Barriadas of Lima: Slums or Hope or Despair? Problems or Solution?” *Geography* 90 (2005): 200.

<sup>5</sup> Jose Matos Mar, *Estudio de las Barriadas Limeñas*, (Lima: 1966), 20.

Matos Mar described the formation of the *barriadas* as the result of internal migration with certain national and local characteristics influencing their creation. He listed these national characteristics including the rapid increase in the national population of Peru; inadequate economic increase that did not provide enough jobs for the growing population; rural inhabitants abandoning the idea of the small rural land owner; low quality of life outside the city; migration from people who sought to go somewhere where there more opportunities to succeed in life; and the rise of a centralized government, which favors Lima as the center for opportunities as it is where the national government is located, the economic center of Peru, and the largest development of industries.<sup>6</sup> Local characteristics included the limits to the economic development in Lima, which prevent less-skilled laborers to succeed economically in the city, thus forcing them to create housing on its outskirts; the lack of housing due to the 1940 earthquake or demolitions; and politicians using the slums as a way to receive sympathy, which further encouraged the creation of more slums.<sup>7</sup>

Despite Matos Mar's theories of the origins of the *barriadas* in Lima, he also noted that they were not unique to Peru. He states that there are many *barriada* equivalents surrounding populated cities in many other Latin American countries such as: "barrios hongos" in Chile; favelas in Brazil; *cantegriles* in Uruguay; *barrios proletarios* in Mexico; *villas miserias* in Argentina; *ranchos* in Venezuela; and *barrios brujo*s in Panamá. Ultimately, what these shantytowns have in common is their creation through internal migration. This is what occurred in Lima as in the 1960's, migration was the result of the 50% population growth in Lima, where about 75% of the population

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 21-22.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 22.

identified themselves as migrants. About 40% of the migrants were from the coastal regions of the country, while about 50% were from the mountainous areas.<sup>8</sup> Some of the push factors included natural disasters, such as earthquakes and floods, forcing people to move elsewhere. Rural poverty is also seen as a push factor that has resulted in people wishing to move to Lima, a city where many see opportunity to succeed financially.<sup>9</sup> The large amount of migrants leaving the rural areas resulted in an improvement of man to land ration, agricultural production, and living standards.<sup>10</sup> Although, since the educated population was more likely to migrate to Lima, the population left in the rural areas was less likely to challenge the oligarchs in charge of them.<sup>11</sup> This abuse from the oligarchs in these rural towns created tensions that allowed the militia groups, like the Shining Path, to take over towns like Ayacucho and begin their violent guerilla warfare against the Peruvian government.<sup>12</sup>

Either way, the dramatic growth of the *barriadas* after 1950 points to the trend of a large wave of migrants into Lima at that time. These settlements appeared to have a similar amount of migrant men and women living in the *barriadas*. In the *barriada* City of God in the 1950's, 50% of its inhabitants were men, and 50% were women.<sup>13</sup> Later, within a few decades, the Wall of Shame highlighted the tensions created by a second wave of migration that was impacted directly from the internal conflict during the 1980's.

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<sup>8</sup> Bill Chambers, "The *Barriadas* of Lima: Slums or Hope or Despair? Problems or Solution?" *Geography* 90 (2005): 203.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 204.

<sup>10</sup> David Collier, *Squatters and Oligarchs: Authoritarian Rule and Policy Change in Peru*, (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1976), 14.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 14-15.

<sup>12</sup> Jaymie Heilman, *Before the Shining Path: Politics in Rural Ayacucho, 1895-1980*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010).

<sup>13</sup> Jose Matos Mar, *Estudio de las Barriadas Limeñas*, (Lima: 1966), 67.

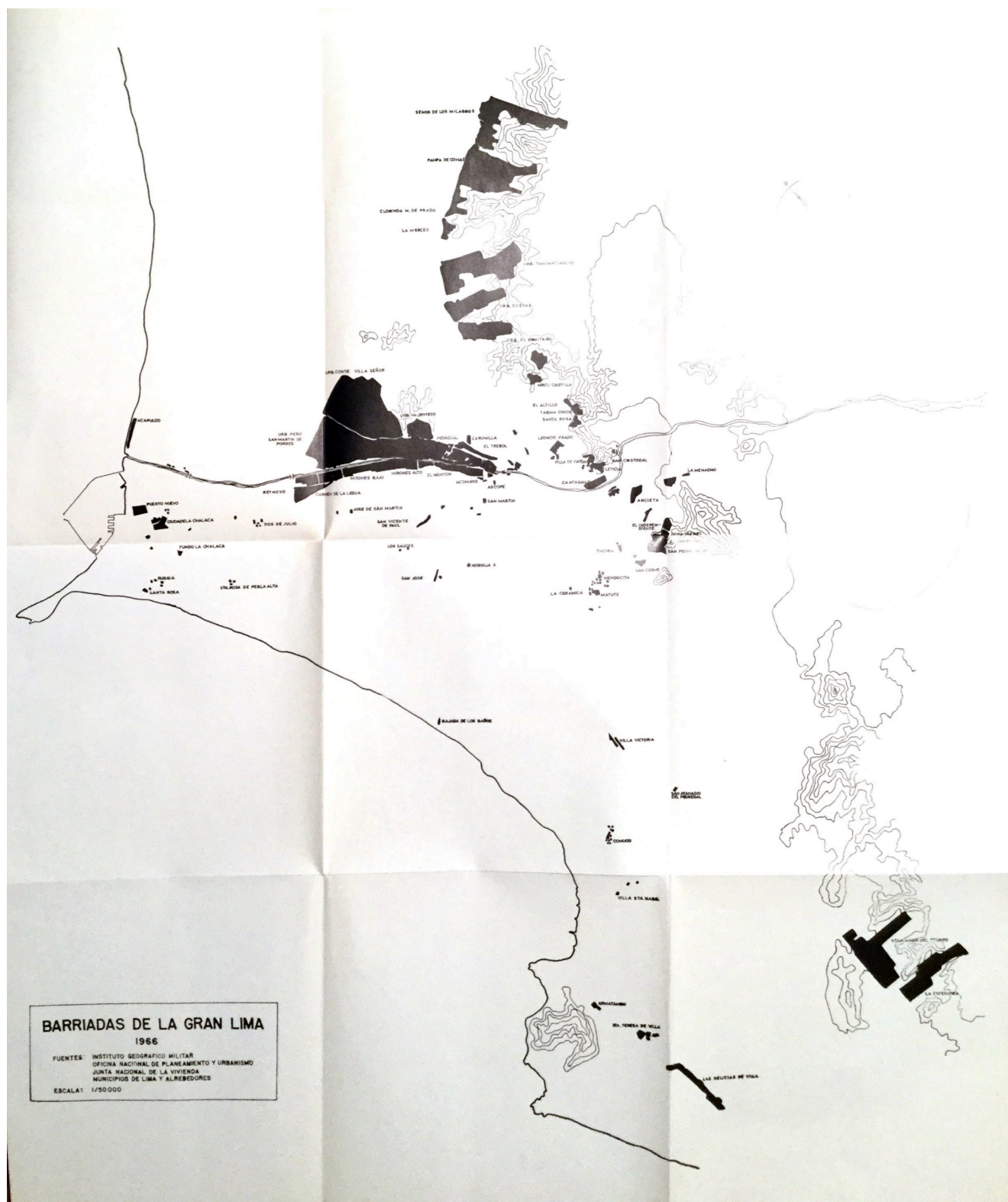
The presence of the migrants resulted in inhabitants of Lima to allow a clear physical division that would segregate the wealthy inhabitants and the poor shantytown dwellers. It is also important to note that a part of the *barriada* population are of Indigenous descent. Given the fact that Peru has historically marginalized these racial ethnic groups, this paper seeks to discover if the racial makeup of the *barriadas* was a significant factor in social outcomes for their inhabitants.

These dramatic changes raise the question of how to measure the impact of the first wave of migration, that is, its significance for later urban outcomes. More specifically, what were the political, economic, and social consequences of the first wave on the urban landscape? Social impact refers to the influence of people of Indigenous descent on the city of Lima. Were the actions of the people of Casuarinas rooted in a previous sentiment that may have formed during the first wave of migration? This thesis seeks to find the answer to these questions. Specifically, I will measure any economic outcomes based on citywide impact the *barriadas* may have had on Lima. I will also measure political outcomes through any government response towards the development of the *barriadas* growth in government representation, size, infrastructure, and as social centers. Finally, this paper will measure social outcomes via racial discrimination reported by inhabitants of the *barriadas*; government discrimination; and physical separation due to the race of the *barriadas* inhabitants.

As the “Wall of Shame” reminds us, segregation of the poor and rich is a reality in Peru that not only persists, but also shamefully public. Although practices of inequality and racism have existed long before the twentieth century, the explosion of internal migration and urbanization beginning in the mid-1900’s revealed new forms of these

practices. Segregation and discrimination of the shantytown residents were new social realities, but rooted in older sentiments. By investigating the rise of the *barriadas* between 1950 and 1980 as a recent expression of historical structures of inequality in Peru, I hope to not just explain how the Wall of Shame came to be, but also to better understand discrimination in Peru more broadly.





A map depicting the location of the barriadas in Lima in 1955. The barriadas are highlighted in black.

Source: Jose Matos Mar, *Estudio de las Barriadas Limeñas*, (Lima: 1966).

### **Political Impact of the Barriadas:**

To track the relationship between the growing barriadas and politics in Peru, one must first take a look at the political context during the first large wave of barriadas during the mid-twentieth century. This will help explain why certain political figures reacted to the barriadas in certain ways. Frank Andrews and George Phillips state that at first, the government resisted the initial invasions, using the police to force out the squatters. Eventually a relatively progressive national government began to accept the existence of the barriadas. Starting in 1961, the Peruvian government halted in forcing out the squatters and instead ordered the National Housing Authority to send planners into the barriadas to help install utilities.<sup>14</sup>

What caused the Peruvian government to enact this type of policy in order to address the barriadas? We must begin with President Manuel Odría, who was in power from 1948 to 1956. In order to understand Odría's involvement with the barriadas, one must understand his opposition to the APRA political party. APRA was a reformist party that faced opposition from Odría when attempting to strengthen their base and political power in the 1940's. In 1948, APRA attempted a failed coup d'état against Odría, resulting in Odría responding with arrests of APRA members and unions linked to the political party. APRA had a strong base with the working and lower class, which resulted in Odría attempting to appeal to this demographic in order to, impede support for the APRA and any similar groups that would oppose him.<sup>15</sup> This explains the change in

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<sup>14</sup> Frank Andrews, et al., "The Squatters of Lima: Who They Are and What They Want," *The Journal of Developing Areas* 4 (1970): 212.

<sup>15</sup> Abraham Lowenthal, *The Peruvian Experiment*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015), 134.

sentiment in these years towards acceptance of the *barriadas*, by recognizing them and attempting to integrate them into the city of Lima.

Manuel Prado, a conservative, was elected president, following Odría from 1956 until 1962.<sup>16</sup> Government officials began to realize, by 1956, that the *barriadas* represented a large problem for Lima. While other slums, located inside the city of Lima, had worse living conditions than *barriadas*, the squatter settlements were very visible and publicly illegal.<sup>17</sup> While the *barriadas* were located on the periphery of the urbanized and heavily populated areas of the city, the *callejones*, the most common type of slums in Lima throughout the late twentieth century, were located inside the heavily populated and urbanized area of Lima.<sup>18</sup> *Callejones* can be easily missed walking down the streets of Lima as the only way to enter one is through a single door or passageway. After passing the entrance, there is a large patio that is surrounded by rows of small dwellings. Unlike the *barriadas* who own their invaded land, the residents of the *Callejones* pay rent to live in their homes.<sup>19</sup> The *callejones* pre-date the *barriadas*, since they were created in the late nineteenth century for workers and migrants but were rented out to as low-income housing in the early twentieth century. These slums often have a limited amount of utility services, poor ventilation, and a dangerous amount of overcrowding.<sup>20</sup> Nonetheless, the *barriadas* reflected the government's failure to address its largest city's poverty, disorganization, and unsanitary conditions in its housing settlements surrounding the city.

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<sup>16</sup> Allan Austin, et al., *Urban Government for Metropolitan Lima*, (New York: Praeger Publishers 1970), 44.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 142.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 139.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 139.

Historically there has been a prejudice against the *barriadas* and their contribution to Lima.<sup>21</sup> In his 1958 report to the UN's Economic and Social Council, José Matos Mar stated that, "the common feature of all the *barriadas* is their instability. They are unhealthy... low wages and highly inadequate living conditions have created problems of health and nutrition..."<sup>22</sup> Matos Mar clearly believed that the *barriadas* did not contribute to the well-being of Lima, as they experienced its urbanization during this time period. In fact, he states that the *barriadas* demonstrated, "a clear idea of the problem of urbanization in Peru."<sup>23</sup>

It was only a matter of time when the government would attempt to seriously address the issue of the *barriadas*. The Prado administration appointed a commission that studied the problems of the *barriadas* and published a report in 1958 with recommendations on how the administration should address the settlements. The Prado administration responded accordingly and passed Law 13517 on 1961.<sup>24</sup> The law addressed the issue of the *barriadas* by declaring the remodeling, sanitation, and legalization of *barriadas* to be of public and national interest, and enacted the process to transform the *barriadas* to popular urban centers of social interest. Remodeling meant to adapt the *barriada* by equipping them with urban essentials. Sanitization meant installing irrigation and drainage channels, eliminating waste, installing drinking water services, constructing and improving traffic routes, and establishing public and private electric lighting.

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<sup>21</sup> Abraham Lowenthal, *The Peruvian Experiment*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015), 137.

<sup>22</sup> José Matos Mar, "Migration and Urbanization – The "Barriadas" of Lima," *Ekistics* 12 (1961): 356-357.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 356.

<sup>24</sup> Allan Austin, et al., *Urban Government for Metropolitan Lima*, (New York: Praeger Publishers 1970), 142.

Lastly, legalization meant recognizing a marginal neighborhood, which would establish the legal situation with the owner of the land as well as the occupant established on it. The law prohibited the creation of new *barriadas*, stating that any *barriadas* created after the passing of this law wouldn't be included in its plan to aid and urbanize them. The National Housing Corporation was tasked with enforcing the provisions of the law. The Peruvian government would provide, through the Housing Corporation, technical direction, materials, and economic resources for the construction of the following services: schools, medical posts, churches, parks, sports fields, civic centers, police stations, job training centers, markets, craft workshops, domestic industry workshops, trade centers, and industrial production centers.<sup>25</sup>

From these provisions of the law, it is clear that the Prado Administration was not accepting the *barriadas* with open arms but instead attempting to get rid of them through integrating the ones that currently exist into the urban areas of Lima and creating better housing and living conditions in poorer areas so that squatter settlements would cease to exist. The law was able to pass due to the congressional support from the APRA party that supported the law due to their desire to pass legislation that promoted a solution for the squatter settlements for the upcoming 1962 elections.<sup>26</sup> Thus, the fact that the *barriadas* were so publicly visible to the average Peruvian and were looked down upon, helped alter the government's actions on how to approach the squatter settlements.

Though the law was strongly supported by Prado and the military junta that succeeded him, when Fernando Belaúde came to power in 1963, his administration halted the progress to due lack of interest as well as budget cuts due to congressional

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<sup>25</sup> Alberto Arca et al., *Ley Numero 13517*, (1961).

<sup>26</sup> Abraham Lowenthal, *The Peruvian Experiment*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015), 140.

opposition.<sup>27</sup> In 1963, the National Housing Board (JNV) was created by the military junta in charge before Belaúde to take the place of the National Housing Corporation. Although the organization was autonomous, it lacked funds to help with the problem of the *barriadas*, so they became dependent on congress. The JNV had the power to recognize *barriadas*, decide how and which *barriadas* could be improved, as well as which should be eradicated, and could also grant titles to land, promote mass-urbanization projects, and provide housing loans. Despite this, the JNV lacked the ability to begin the majority of the projects due to budgetary constraints. Law 13517 allowed the creation of low-cost suburban units in order to deter the creation of future *barriadas*, but they were never constructed and thus new *barriadas* continued to form well after the 1960's. In 1964, the JNV devised a plan to house the *barriada* inhabitants in flat land close to the city owned by plantation owners and speculators. They asked congress to expropriate the land, but congress did not want to raise taxes to do so and felt that the money spent on this project could be better used elsewhere. President Belaunde did not fight for the project, and adding insult to injury, the JNV's payroll was also severely cut.<sup>28</sup> The large staff that had initiated the plan to move the *barriada* inhabitants into the city now had few remaining members. Since 1965, the JNV has lacked the resources to transform the *barriadas* despite having the legal power to do so.<sup>29</sup>

At the same time, we should also compare how the government reacted to the needs of the *barriada* inhabitants versus what they actually desired. On April 1967, fifteen Peruvian interviewers trained by the Centro de Investigaciones Sociales por Muestro

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>28</sup> Allan Austin, et al., *Urban Government for Metropolitan Lima*, (New York: Praeger Publishers 1970), 143.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 144.

conducted a study on the residents of the *barriadas* using the population of the *barriadas* in the Lima-Callao metropolitan area, as those recognized by the National Housing Board.<sup>30</sup> The survey had two goals: the first was to collect up-to-date information about the *barriadas* and its inhabitants; and the second was to find out what the *barriada* inhabitants believed they needed most for themselves and their communities.<sup>31</sup> The questionnaires asked the participants two types of questions about public and private services: one that sought to find the extent of dissatisfaction with the services; and one that sought to find how intense the dissatisfaction was.<sup>32</sup> Many inhabitants had issues with the location of medical services, the availability of property titles, access to water and sewer systems.<sup>33</sup> Nonetheless, the most widespread source of dissatisfaction, according to the survey results, was the unpaved condition of the streets in the *barriadas*, with 89% claiming to be dissatisfied with it. Many also had issue with the large presence of dust that the unpaved roads provided.<sup>34</sup>

Regarding the services mentioned in the survey above, the Peruvian government in the 1960's did in fact address some of them. Lima powered its electricity using hydroelectric and thermal plants at a time where many *barriadas* did not have electricity. In 1965, forty-two *barriadas* were wired into the electrical system that powered Lima.<sup>35</sup> The *Empresas Eléctricas Asociadas* (EEAA) supported the electrical demands of the city and were dependent on utility charges. In the mid-1960's the Tariff Commission, that

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<sup>30</sup> Frank Andrews, et al., "The Squatters of Lima: Who They Are and What They Want," *The Journal of Developing Areas* 4 (1970): 214.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 213.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 217.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 217-219.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 219.

<sup>35</sup> Allan Austin, et al., *Urban Government for Metropolitan Lima*, (New York: Praeger Publishers 1970), 83.

determined the electricity rates, allowed EEAA to increase its rates.<sup>36</sup> The general household faced a five to twelve percent increase, while local and national government organizations were provided lower rates. The EEAA gave the *barriadas* a special rate for payment. The *barriadas* that don't have electricity use candles, bottled gas, kerosene, and lanterns. The EEAA did not make installations in *barriadas* without a land title because they didn't want to spend money on installations that may be declared illegal. When a *barriada* secured their land title, they were the supplied with electricity.<sup>37</sup>

Concerning health services, the National Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare is responsible for the public health of Lima. In 1966, polio vaccinations were distributed to children all throughout Lima, as well as the *barriadas* with 56 posts established in the Callao *barriadas*.<sup>38</sup> The Ministry expanded its area of health coverage away from the center of urbanized Lima, to include the *barriadas*, which in result brings more legitimacy to these settlements as a part of the city of Lima.

Regarding water supply and sewage, the city of Lima had not been prepared for the population explosion that occurred in the twentieth century. While some institutions, like electricity, were able to plan ahead and adjust, the water and sewage institutions did not.<sup>39</sup> By mid-1961, the two services were in terrible conditions. In 1963, a study of three hundred and seventeen *barriadas* reported that only 2% had a piped water supply, and 56% did not have any type of water supply.<sup>40</sup> In 1962, the newly formed military junta created the Lima Water and Sewage Corporation (COSAL), a state corporation that was

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 84.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 85.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 87.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 109.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 112.



given public and private funding for projects that would allow it to serve the population of Lima that lived in the most urbanized area.<sup>41</sup> For the most part, the *barriadas* were not included in COSAL's area of coverage and even those who pressured the organization to include them in their coverage didn't always receive installation of street facilities. Due to lack of money, the *barriadas* were not helped by COSAL and instead had to construct the local sewage systems themselves. The National Housing Board helped fund the construction of pipes in two *barriadas* as it was their responsibility to provide this service to the *barriadas*. Yet, they lacked the funds to do so successfully in all of them. The *barriada* members that didn't have these systems installed instead bought water from water trucks, and used the street, irrigation ditches, and outhouses for sewage.<sup>42</sup>

Concerning transportation, the survival of the *barriadas* was heavily dependent on the bus service of Lima.<sup>43</sup> The poor bus service in Peru was the result of its lack of profit. The bus companies and the government refused to raise the transportation rates with discounted rates given to students, workers, and uniformed soldiers. The regular rate of the bus line was 8.2 cents in the mid-1960's. *Barriada* routes were also given a discount, charging only 6 cents.<sup>44</sup> This discount may be due to the fact that the *barriada* members tended to be a part of the lower class of Lima, and the lower rate would provide more incentive for the *barriada* members to ride the bus. Whatever the reason, the presence of the *barriadas* were able to affect the cost of the transportation, most likely to convenience them. The Lima Provincial Council (CPL) also constructed several public road projects from 1964-1966. One was the Perú Avenue, located at the center of the *barriada* San

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 114.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 116.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 122.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 123.

Martín de Porras. Funded by the CPL, this was the most well constructed street in any *barriada*. The CPL also extended the Aviación Avenue into one of the worst crime centers in Lima.<sup>45</sup> The CPL was attempting to help urbanize and connect poorer areas of Lima to the rest of the city, including the *barriadas*.

When comparing the 1967 survey and the reality of government involvement with the public services in the *barriadas* during this time, it appears that there were some attempts to genuinely address the needs of the *barriada* members. The largest complaint of the *barriada* members – the unpaved roads – was somewhat addressed by the CPL, which did end up constructing some roads to the *barriadas*, but the largest project during that time period was Paseo de la República Project, which was designed to carry large amounts of traffic from down-town Lima south to Miraflores,<sup>46</sup> The CPL were placing more focus on expanding urbanization to upscale areas like Miraflores, rather than focusing on the more underdeveloped *barriadas*. In the 1960's, the Peruvian government attempted the bare minimum to try and uplift the *barriadas*, not out of altruistic motives but rather for political gain or shame of their existence. Thus, what resulted were many efforts to attempt to urbanize and integrate the *barriadas* into Lima, but no funds or dedication to complete the task.

### **Economic Impact of the Barriadas:**

The common view about the *barriadas* in the early to mid-twentieth century was that they were filled with supposedly uneducated and unmotivated migrant Indians from the rural areas of Peru; that they were an economic burden on the city of Lima; and

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 133.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 134.

finally, that they were a breeding ground for radical ideologies potentially threatening the Peru state. Anthropologist William Mangin noted that this was a false stereotype of the *barriadas*. Specifically, he disagreed with the concept that the *barriadas* were an economic burden on the city of Lima.<sup>47</sup> Instead, Mangin argued that the existence of squatter settlements throughout Latin America have helped solve the problem of low-cost housing to shelter a booming population.<sup>48</sup> This sentiment had become the newly accepted norm in scholarly journals.

In a 1958 report to the UN titled, “Migration and Urbanization – The ‘Barriadas’ of Lima,” Anthropologist José Matos’ reported that the *barriadas* were unstable due to its inhabitants’ “backwardness,” and “unhealthy” manner of living and inability to help Lima modernize. He stated that the migrants increased the large amount of unskilled labor that was already available in Lima, which in turn prevented efforts to improve working and living conditions.<sup>49</sup> He criticized their presence as a burden for the city, as their low wages and poor living conditions would contribute to its problems of health and nutrition.<sup>50</sup>

In 1974, Anthropologist Robert Weller contested the proposed idea that migrants moving to Lima were lowering the socio-economic levels. In his article, “The Structural Assimilation of In-Migrants to Lima, Peru” he stated that there is not enough data to state that the massive influx of in-migrants is drastically lowering the socio-economic levels in Lima. Thus, he concluded that the lowering of the socio-economic levels must be due to

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<sup>47</sup> Willam Mangin, “Squatter Settlements,” *Scientific American* 4 (1967): 21.

<sup>48</sup> William Mangin, “Latin American Squatter Settlements: A Problem and a Solution,” *Latin American Research Review* 2 (1967): 74.

<sup>49</sup> José Matos Mar, “Migration and Urbanization – The “Barriadas” of Lima,” *Ekistics* 12 (1961): 356.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 357.

the inability of the government to provide socially adequate services.<sup>51</sup> Weller's article disputes Matos Mars' assumptions that the migrants living in the *barriadas* were part of the problem in lowering the quality of life for the rest of Lima's inhabitants. Instead of placing blame on the migrants, he places the blame on the Peruvian government.

Providing another view, geographer Bill Chambers argued in 2005 that that the *barriadas* were not a burden on the city as other scholars may have suggested, but rather catalysts that can help restructure the city of Lima.<sup>52</sup> He stated that there were many services that developed in the *barriadas*, such as small local industries and transportation.<sup>53</sup> The *barriadas* were positive for Lima's economic advancement because they provided housing for millions of homeless people, employed its inhabitants, and enhanced the real estate of Lima, much like what Mangin believed.<sup>54</sup> Historian David Soll agreed with this sentiment in his article, "Healthy Country, Unhealthy City: Population Growth, Migration, and Urban Sanitation in Lima and Manila." He stated that the large number of migrants arriving in Lima, and the incompetence of the government, was the reason the *barriadas* were created and were maintained for decades with a low quality of life.<sup>55</sup> Yet, he believed that the "*barriadas*" contributed to urbanization as the people of the settlements began to create their own communities and jobs. This in turn eventually resulted in the rise of modern democracy, which would eventually create a

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<sup>51</sup> Robert Weller, "The Structural Assimilation of In-Migrants to Lima, Peru," *The International Migration Review* 8 (1974): 539

<sup>52</sup> Bill Chambers, "The *Barriadas* of Lima: Slums or Hope or Despair? Problems or Solution?" *Geography* 90 (2005): 200.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 218.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 222.

<sup>55</sup> David Soll, "Healthy Country, Unhealthy City: Population Growth, Migration, and Urban Sanitation in Lima and Manila," *Global Environment* 5 (2012): 98.

better quality of life for the people of the *barriadas*.<sup>56</sup> Economist Hernando de Soto believed that excessive governmental bureaucracy and a system that allows business and government elites to manipulate the system to their advantage results in underdevelopment. Thus, he praised informal means of establishing housing and providing services.<sup>57</sup> De Soto thought that these informal economic activities contributed heavily to the national economy.<sup>58</sup>

The consensus that the *barriadas* raised the quality of a city can be measured by its economic impact through a few different factors. Mangin believed that the squatter settlements in Latin America made four kinds of contributions to the national economy: land improvement and housing, contribution to the job market, the growth of small business in squatter settlements, and “intangible social capital invested in the creation of a community.”<sup>59</sup> As stated earlier, the creation of the *barriadas* improved the barren and abandoned land on the periphery of the city.<sup>60</sup> Since the *barriada* residents own the land, they don’t have to pay rent and can thus invest any excess money into construction projects inside the settlements that can last up to ten years to finish.<sup>61</sup> By using up this previously unused land, the *barriada* inhabitants help expand the city of Lima and build and expand their own houses. While at first the houses were made of straw, as soon as the inhabitants collected enough money, they upgraded to a house made of brick and

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<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 102.

<sup>57</sup> Ray Bromely, “A New Path to Development? The Significance and Impact of Hernando De Soto’s Ideas on Underdevelopment, Production, and Reproduction,” *Economic Geography* 66 (1990): 330.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 331.

<sup>59</sup> William Mangin, “Latin American Squatter Settlements: A Problem and a Solution,” *Latin American Research Review* 2 (1967): 74-77.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 74.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 74-75.

cement.<sup>62</sup> Mangin's next point was that the squatter settlements contributed to the job market, by either providing jobs for the residents themselves or providing workers for certain occupations inside the city. Despite the stereotype of the low-income worker from the *barriada*, Mangin states that these residents in Lima have several middle-class occupations such as teachers and lawyers. In fact, the *barriada* Pampa de Comas had a doctor, police lieutenant, and a lawyer in their local club.<sup>63</sup>

If I were to compare the income and occupations of an average *barriada* inhabitant and an inhabitant of metropolitan Lima, it becomes clear that they make similar contributions to the Peruvian economy. In 1956, the average income of individuals living in the *barriadas* was about 87% of the average wage in Lima, and in 1958 it was 74%. In 1956 the average household income in the *barriadas* was 120% of the average household in Lima, 85% in 1961-1962, and 114% in 1967.<sup>64</sup> While the average *barriada* resident made less than the average metropolitan resident, they are not significantly lower and their averages in households fluctuates between making less than the metropolitan family and making more.

The resident in the two areas also appear to work in similar occupations. Between 1958 and 1959, the *barriada* industry of employment with the highest percentage was in manufacturing with 33.62%, with construction in second place at 18.25%, and commerce in third with 17.84%. In 1961, the metropolitan Lima industry of employment with the

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<sup>62</sup> Willam Mangin, "Squatter Settlements." *Scientific American* 4 (1967): 23.

<sup>63</sup> William Mangin, "Latin American Squatter Settlements: A Problem and a Solution." *Latin American Research Review* 2 (1967): 75.

<sup>64</sup> Robert Lewis, "Employment and Income in Low-Income Settlements of Lima, Peru," *Review of Social Economy* 33 (1975): 144.

highest percentage was services at 32.29%, with manufacturing in second place at 23.04%, and commerce at third at 18.10%.<sup>65</sup>

There was also an increase in average income for the average *barriada* household from the 1950's to the 1960's. The average income of the *barriada* households in 1956 was \$56.78 a month, in 1961-962 it was \$50.70 a month, and in 1967 it was \$75.81 a month.<sup>66</sup> The average wage increased in Lima by 25%, which can explain the rise in the wages received by families in the *barriadas* throughout these years.<sup>67</sup> This also shows how connected the average *barriada* household is to the economy of Lima. This contradicts any previous notions of the *barriadas* as poverty-stricken slums that are only a financial burden to the city of Lima. In fact, the *barriada* residents' contribution to the Peruvian economy is similar to the contribution of the average inhabitant of metropolitan Lima, and they also provide many other economic contributions to the city.

### **Social Impact of the Barriadas:**

There is an aspect of historical context necessary to understand both the experiences and outcomes of the *barriadas* in Lima: the racial ethnic identities of their inhabitants. As stated before, a large portion of the migrants that created the *barriadas* were from the mountainous areas of Peru. In the late 1960's, the largest racial identity in the mountainous areas of Peru was Indian, with the economic life dominated by mestizos.<sup>68</sup> The 1940 census in Peru reported that 53% identified as white or mestizo,

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 146.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 148.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 149.

<sup>68</sup> Allan Austin, et al., *Urban Government for Metropolitan Lima*, (New York: Praeger Publishers 1970), 6.

46% of the population identified as Indian, 0.68% identified from an Oriental background, and 0.47% identified as “Negroes.”<sup>69</sup> In his address to the UN in 1958, Jose Matos Mar referred to the people who inhabit the *barriadas* as “urban mestizos” and a part of the “Indian” community.<sup>70</sup> Thus, a portion of the population of the *barriadas*, may be seen as Indigenous, an ethnic identity that has historically been marginalized in Peru.

During Peru’s colonial era, the Spaniards created the *casta* (caste system) to promote a racialized socioeconomic hierarchy. This system separated people into different classes by their intersecting race and class identities. The elite class was comprised of Christians of European descent, and below them in social status were various categories including *mestizos*, that is, people of mixed Indigenous and European parentage. The next lowest strata consisted of “mulattos,” people of mixed European and African descent or appearance. The “pure” Indigenous and Afrodescended people, were the lowest two groups in this racial hierarchy.<sup>71</sup> The Spaniards used this *casta* system in order to identify and force people of Indigenous descent into a forced labor draft, known as the *mita*. The Inca rulers had previously created the *mita* in order to force their subjects to construct projects for the empire. The Spaniards continued the use of the *mita* after the fall of the Inca Empire, as a way to force the Indigenous to work in the silver mines for no pay.<sup>72</sup> Not only was the racism established in the colonial era spread by the colonizers, it was internalized as truth by the colonized. This helped strengthen the colonial order

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>70</sup> José Matos Mar, “Migration and Urbanization – The “Barriadas” of Lima,” *Ekistics* 12 (1961): 357-358.

<sup>71</sup> Rutilio Martinez, “Latin America’s Racial Caste System: Salient Marketing Implications,” *International Business & Economics Research Journal* 7 (2008). 55.

<sup>72</sup> John Chasteen, *Born in Blood and Fire: A Concise History of Latin America*, (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2001), 57.



established by the colonizers. The fall of the Túpac Amaru II rebellion, which attempted to unify the traditionally isolated and heterogeneous indigenous population, opened the door to the deterioration of the condition of the Indigenous Peruvians.<sup>73</sup> By the twentieth century, the term Indian had become synonymous with “campesino,” which meant peasant farmer, and poor. This helped push the narrative of the “natural inferiority” of the Indian, as they were now always presented as poor.<sup>74</sup>

For the most part, modern Peru consists of two groups, mestizo and Indian. Although the term mestizo traditionally refers to people of mixed European and Indian descent, cultural characteristics, such as clothing and language, was mainly what labeled someone as a mestizo or Indian.<sup>75</sup> Indians are at the bottom of the social structure, who mainly speak their native language of Quechua or Aymara and wear Indian clothing. The Indigenous are often found in the mountainous areas of Peru, mainly in farming villages. Mestizos, on the other hand, occupy mainly the middle of the social structure, predominantly speaking Spanish and wearing western clothing. In Lima, the mestizos are the largest group in Lima and occupy the middle and sometimes upper-strata of the social structure in the city.<sup>76</sup> Thus, with this context presented, it becomes clearer as to why the residents of metropolitan Lima view the *barriadas*, which have a noticeable Indian population, a certain way.

The *casta* system was officially eradicated after Peru gained its independence, however, its impact on Peruvian society continued to leave its mark centuries later.

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<sup>73</sup> Nelson Manrique. *La Piel y La Pluma*, (Lima: CIDIAG, 1999), 14.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>75</sup> Allan Austin, et al., *Urban Government for Metropolitan Lima*, (New York: Praeger Publishers 1970), 15.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 16.

Exploitation of mestizos and the Indigenous continued into the twentieth century. In 1969, the Peruvian junta leader Juan Velasco Alvarado gave a speech titled, “Message to the Nation on Agrarian Reform.” In the speech he states that he is tired of Peruvian society treating the Indigenous population as second-class citizens, and exploiting them. His solution was to pass an agrarian reform that would uplift the Indigenous population by giving them the land that they work on, and freeing them of any exploitation.<sup>77</sup> Historian Neslon Manrique has also stated that discrimination against the Indigenous and mestizos was still well and alive in Peru throughout the twentieth century. He believed that the most important element in understanding the social crisis in Peru was the persistence of ethnic and racial discrimination. When referring to the “social crisis,” Manrique meant to the social tensions that have occurred over the past decades throughout Lima that has resulted in violence, such as the emergence of the Shining Path.<sup>78</sup> Thus, the legacy of the *casta* system clearly left its mark on modern Peruvian politics.

William Mangin noted that the *barriadas* were often viewed as the “centers of illness, vice, crime, family disorganization, child neglect, communism, radicalism, anarchy, resistance to progress, and that these conditions are mainly due to migration.”<sup>79</sup> In the UN report, Matos Mar heavily criticized the existence of the *barriadas* because he believed that they were increasing the already large amount of unskilled laborers, which

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<sup>77</sup> Leonore Veltfort, “Message to the Nation on the Agrarian Reform, From the President of the Republic of Peru, General Juan Velasco Alvarado,” *International Journal of Politics* 1 (1971): 201.

<sup>78</sup> Nelson Manrique, *La Piel y La Pluma*, (Lima: CIDIAG, 1999), 25.

<sup>79</sup> William Mangin et al., “Cultural and Psychological Characteristics of Mountain Migrants to Lima, Peru,” *Sociologus* 14 (1964): 82.

prevented the improvement of living and working conditions.<sup>80</sup> He also stated that the arrival of the migrants resulted in these settlements that lack public amenities, which impedes progress for the city and that they also create health and nutrition problems because of the low wages they make and their poor living conditions.<sup>81</sup> Mangin stated that his analysis of police records from the *barriadas* doesn't reflect this perceived reality of a dangerous *barriada* with higher crime rates. He used his experiences in Peru in the 1960's, including his conversations with physicians, and observations in hospitals, to come to the conclusion that the *barriadas* most likely did not have a significantly lower rate of sickness than other lower class areas in the city.<sup>82</sup> Nonetheless, the general perception from the rest of the city viewed the *barriadas* as "invaders" who were an economic and social threat to them as well as deteriorating their economic, social, and political resources.<sup>83</sup>

As the *barriadas* are highly visible in the city of Lima and have the reputation of being largely inhabited by Indigenous people, the Peruvian government may have kept this in mind when implementing their policies for the integration of the *barriadas* into the rest of metropolitan Lima. Famous Peruvian writer and political figure Mario Vargas Llosa related to this sentiment. He once wrote in a 1990's Harper's article that

Indian peasants live in such a primitive way that communication is practically impossible. It is only when they move to the cities that they have the opportunity to mingle with the other Peru. The price they must pay for integration is high—

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<sup>80</sup> José Matos Mar, "Migration and Urbanization – The "Barriadas" of Lima," *Ekistics* 12 (1961): 356.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 357.

<sup>82</sup> William Mangin et al., "Cultural and Psychological Characteristics of Mountain Migrants to Lima, Peru," *Sociologus* 14 (1964): 82.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 86.

renunciation of their culture, their language; their beliefs, their traditions and customs, and the adoption of the culture of their ancient masters. After one generation they become mestizos. They are no longer Indians.<sup>84</sup>

Unlike like Nelson Manrique, Vargas Llosa believed that the Indigenous population and their customs were hindering Peru's progress into a modernized world.<sup>85</sup> From this quote, it becomes clear that he believed that proper way to address the Indigenous was not to respect their culture but to attempt to eradicate it and transform them into modern mestizos. It would be through this process that Peru could become a more modernized country.

This sentiment was commonly reflected in the Indigenous inhabitants of the *barriadas*. The representation of Indian culture through their clothes, language, and appearance, "indicated backwardness and 'Indianness'" was heavily disliked and feared by the Lima residents.<sup>86</sup> While the parents in the *barriadas* tend to work low level and low paying occupations, they aspired for their children to work more professional jobs. Children were encouraged to aspire to be a modern national Peruvian, a rejection of Indian and Quechua culture. A late twentieth century national "modern" Peruvian did not follow in the footsteps of Creole Colonial Spanish tradition, but rather a modernized western culture similar to twentieth century New York and Paris.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Mario Vargas Llosa, "Questions of Conquest: What Columbus Wrought, and What He Did No," *Harper's Magazine*, (December 1990), <https://harpers.org/archive/1990/12/questions-of-conquest/>.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> William Mangin et al., "Cultural and Psychological Characteristics of Mountain Migrants to Lima, Peru," *Sociologus* 14 (1964): 83.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 84.

The Velasco Administration also reflected this sentiment, although in a different form. While Velasco had passed the Agrarian Reform in the late 1960's to uplift the Indigenous population to help modernize Peru, he was also attempting to erase the label of the Indian community by referring to them as the "Peasant Communities."<sup>88</sup> In fact he had even erased the word "Indian" from Peru's official vocabulary.<sup>89</sup> Velasco's government was attempting to erase the concept of the Indigenous and attempting to unite their identity with the rest of the ethnic groups in Peru to create one "Peasant Community." While attempting to uplift the actual Indigenous population, it becomes clear that Velasco wanted to erase their identity, which could be made possible by modernizing them in the way described by Vargas Llosa. Thus, it becomes increasingly clear that the national government's attempt to eradicate and integrate the *barriadas* accomplished two goals: hide the visible poverty of Lima and integrate the Indigenous population into *mestizos*.

Although it is important to note that the country of Peru would promote Indigenous customs as the face of Peru's social culture, while rejecting the actual Indigenous population. In the 1950's in Cuzco, *mestizos* would often create physical separation from "cholos" or "cholo *mestizos*" in public areas, with the term *cholo* referring to the Indigenous population that had not shed their Indigenous habits and culture.<sup>90</sup> By the 1970's, many Indigenous people began to reject their Indian social identity due to the social condemnation of their culture as a detriment to the progress of

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<sup>88</sup> Leonore Veltfort, "Message to the Nation on the Agrarian Reform, From the President of the Republic of Peru, General Juan Velasco Alvarado," *International Journal of Politics* 1 (1971): 208.

<sup>89</sup> Marisol de la Cadena, *Indigenous Mestizos*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000), 193.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 265-266.

Peru.<sup>91</sup> Yet, as tourism grew in Cuzco in the twentieth century, the image of the “festive Indian” crafted by the neoindigenistas became a magnet in attracting foreign visitors. The festive Indian placed less emphasis on the concept of image on the illiterate peasant and more on their instinctive musical and choreographic abilities. Neoindigenistas in Cuzco would supervise and authorize which Indigenous art would be placed on display to represent Cuzco culture. Ultimately, the festive Indian became the symbol of the revitalization of regional culture.<sup>92</sup> Although cities like Cuzco used the Indigenous population as a cultural face to attract tourism, many Peruvians continued to reject the actual Indigenous people. This contradictory attitude was evident not just in tourist centers but also more widely in Peru and other Latin American countries.<sup>93</sup>

### **Conclusion:**

As the country of Peru exploded in population in the mid-twentieth century, only the determination of city dwellers looking for a better place to live created the *barriadas*, without much help from the state. The Peruvian government’s lack of ability to provide sufficient housing in Lima created conditions for the growth of squatter settlements, similar to many other cities throughout Latin America in the twentieth century. The *barriada* settlements, initially appearing fairly far removed from the city center, had a large impact on Lima politically, economically, and socially. Despite the national

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 192-193.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 277.

<sup>93</sup> Rebecca Earle, *The Return of the Native: Indians and Myth-Making in Spanish America, 1810-1930*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007); Carolyn Larson, *Our Indigenous Ancestors: A Culture History of Museums, Science, and Identity in Argentina, 1877-1943*, (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2015).

government initially ignoring the settlements, their public visibility resulted in official attempts to hide them from the rest of the world.

The *barriadas* were seen as an embarrassment to Peru. They raised questions about the nation's ability to modernize and provide a respectable quality of life for those who migrated to the city. Despite the fact that the *barriadas* helped support the city of Lima in various ways, such as providing housing for the low-income residents and contributing to the labor demands of the city, they were still seen as an urban blemish. This sentiment was aided by the fact that, to the average Lima resident, the Indigenous population were the faces of the *barriadas*. This historically exploited and oppressed ethnic group had still not been seen with respect by metropolitan Lima by the mid-to-late twentieth century. In a city that was attempting to modernize and progress, the Indigenous population represented regression. Thus, the Peruvian government attempted to hide their "shameful secret" of the *barriadas*.

My analysis of the growth and impact of Lima's *barriadas* concludes in 1980, and thus does not mention the large increase of squatter settlements following the Peruvian government's internal conflict with the Shining Path in the years that followed. Yet, the Wall of Shame shows the continuity of this sentiment of hiding the nation's disadvantaged citizens in the *barriadas*. The attempts to obscure those citizens' poverty also obscured lived aspects of Indigenous culture. For the wealthy residents of Casuarinas, the wall is a way to ignore the *barriadas*. Despite the houses piling up on the dirt hills, the wealthy residents of Lima – who benefit from the low-wage labor of urban migrants – would rather ignore the structures of inequality that have plagued their city for decades, if not centuries.

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